

History of The Nashua Ethnic Awareness Committee (EAC)

In 1986, Mayor James Donchess met with area residents to discuss a specific method by which the city could address some concern and problems surfacing in Nashua. Of special concern was the problem of educating area residents and municipal employees about the cultural and ethnic diversity of a growing city. Out of this meeting, with a reactive agenda, came a proposal for a continuing committee to address the problems. Thus the Mayor's *Ethnic Awareness Committee* was established. Later in the 1990s, the committee would be legislatively created as The Nashua Ethnic Awareness Committee with a defined membership of city department representatives and citizen members.

No longer a small city, Nashua in the 1980s, needed to meet the challenge of greater ethnic and racial diversity. The Committee's chief objective was to facilitate discussions among the various ethnic groups and city government. Initially, the areas of concern were those of discrimination and acculturation. Goals were establish and monthly meetings began.

The current committee continues to promote dialog among city government leaders and community representatives. It also is expanding its communications facilitation with the development of a web page which will contain a resource guide, ethnic community calendar, and more. Additionally, under the leadership of Mayor Donnalee Lozeau, two subcommittees were established under the EAC for better concentration on assistance and concern for refugees and minority youth issues.

Since its inception, the EAC was able to encourage sensitivity workshops, ethnic festivals, greater awareness of Nashua's culturally rich ethnic diversity, and increased intra- and intergroup communications.